

## [Aug Wurdeman]

Week No. 19

Item No. 34

Words 1751

Percent

Received

Accredited

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Form A Circumstances of Interview

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE May 29, 1939 SUBJECT Folklore

1. Name and address of informant Aug. Wurdeman, 2107 14th St.
2. Date and time of interview 5/26-29 1-2 pm. 8-30 11 a.m.
3. Place of interview at his home
4. Name and address of person, if any, who put you in touch with informant
5. Name and address of person, if any, accompanying you
6. Description of room, house, surroundings, etc.

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Dining room well and comfortably furnished; well kept house and yard, surroundings and location ideal Week No. 19

Item No 34

### FORM B Personal History of Informant

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE May 29, 1959 SUBJECT Forklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Aug. Wurdeman, 2107 14th St. Columbus, Nebr.

1. Ancestry German decent
2. Place and date of birth Oldenburg, Germany; Nov. 14, 1865
3. Family Widower - six children all living
4. Place lived in, with dates German 1865-1866; Mayville, Wis. 1866-1868;  
Platte Co. farm 1868-1924; Columbus 1924 to date.
5. Education, with dates Common country school, 1871-1882
6. Occupations and accomplishments, with dates Farmer all his life
7. Special skills and interests Farming and pure bred stock
8. Community and religious activities Active and interested in all community  
affairs; German Lutheran church.
9. Description of informant Of rather slender muscular build; about 160#

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### 10. Other points gained in interview

Mr Wurdeman is a representative of one of the pioneer families of the county, having lived in this community almost his entire life, he looks back to the past when the now highly cultivated farms were tracts of wild unbroken prairie, covered in winter by dazzling and unbroken snow. But as the years passed and settler after settler came, he has seen the pioneer life give way to the modern conveniences and comforts of today.

Form C Text of Interview (Unedited)

NAME OF WORKER Eilert Mohlman ADDRESS Columbus, Nebr.

DATE May 29/39 SUBJECT Folklore

NAME AND ADDRESS OF INFORMANT Aug. Wurdeman 2107 14th St.

My parents were always farmers in the old country, and as they heard through relatives and friends of greater opportunities in America, they came here in the fall of 1866, first locating at Mayville, Wisconsin. My father did not like that country though, for there were too many rocks and stones and too much timber. They piled the rocks along the sides of the fields to make a kind of a fence and to get them out the fields so that they could cultivate it. So after about a year in Wisconsin they came direct to Platte County and homesteaded in Bismark township. He cut his own logs that fall and winter and had the shingles sawed in Columbus so that he could build a log cabin in which we lived for a few years.

Father then brought a yoke of oxen and began to break the prairie. A little later he bought one horse that a neighbor had brought overland from Wisconsin, and with the oxen and one horse he farmed for several years before he bought the second horse. One of the neighbors had also come from Wisconsin, and they lived in a sod house. One time a great rain-storm came up and they were almost drowned before they got out.

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As soon as I was old enough started to go to the country school. One winter day some of the older boys and I went skating on the creek during the noon hour. We had such a good time and fun on the ice that we stayed too long one day, and as we came near the school house we could see the teacher waiting for us with a whip and we all got a good licking that I haven't forgotten to this day. We thought we were the big boys and could stay as long as we wanted to.

In 1887 we built our frame house which is still on the farm today. In the early days my father had bad luck. He was cutting grass with a rather frisky team. The [sickle?] in those days was in back of the mower and when the team got frightened and ran away he was thrown off backwards and fell into the sickle and lost one of his hands. He afterwards had a hook put on the arm and he got along pratty good with it.

In the early days [ther?] were not many flour mills. The neighbors would go together and go to Genoa for flour. As they had to make the trip with ox teams they would be gone a whole week. One time my father came there when the mill was broken down and he stayed there till the mill was fixed again. He slept in the mill. [He?] had his oxen tied near the mill and one of them got scared at the Indians and broke loose and tore the whole platform away.

Then on another trip they got their flour towards evening and they were driving two ox teams and as there was such a bright moon they decided to drive home during the night. Soon it starts to snow. When they were crossing a narrow bridge that night the first wagon upset and spilled all the flour. After loading [?] it back on the wagon they carried the second load over and pulled the wagon across by hand. After they was all loaded again it was daylight and got home at noon.

At another time they were on the way the Omaha to the mill when they met some people coming back who told them they should turn back home as the mill was broken down. So they turned back and soon a big snow storm came up and they came to a straw stack

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where they took shelter. The storm lasted for three days and if it hadn't been for the strawstack they might have been lost.

One time my grandmother and I were home alone when a man came to the house and asked if we didn't have some buttermilk he could have. My grandmother had just churned so she gave him some and some bread and he sat down and ate it. My father and mother had been in the field mowing and when they came home I told them that there had been a man there and in looking down the road we saw him sitting on a section mound. The next morning one of our best milk cows was gone, and we could see where she had gotten out of the yard and we found her standing near this mound where this man had been sitting. It was said he had milked this cow near this mound and would always go back there. This cow never gave any milk afterwards, as they said she was "hexed". Then this cow had a calf later on the calf died and they said we should cook the heart of the [calf?] till it was good and tender and then the cow would be alright again.

There was a farmer near us who had [?] two daughters, and they would always get up at 4-30 in the morning and go out. The father asked them why they got up so early and they said we have to get up and milk. So one morning he watched and follow them and found them milking in the yard. He told them to come in, but they said we have to milk this early in the morning or the cow will die, but he said they should come in the house anyway, and when they did both cows dropped dead.

In the early days there was lots of Indians come to our place. One Sunday my father and grandmother had gone to church; my mother and one brother and I were home alone, when soon the Indians came, about fifteen of them, and started yelling and going around the house and looking in at the windows. My mother was scared to death and put us on the bed and said that we might all be killed. Soon they came in the house and took some flour, bread, butter and onions along, and after searching the house some more they went out and yelled around the house a while and then left, but they didn't bother us.

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In the earlier day things were so different; when the neighbors would get together they seemed to be all of one soul and class. They would always be willing to help without pay. You could borrow money [?] without a note and it would always be paid back.

But prairie fires in those days were always dangerous. We would always make fire lines as soon as the grass got a little dry, and when a fire was seen in the distance there would always be one who would watch to see if the fire would come.

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### SPRING

In the spring time, when the trees are dressed in their brightest green, and uncaged birds sing their sweetest songs, then as we walk abroad among the beauties of nature, our heart gets all aglow with the love of God and to our fellow beings, and we realize that spring is the most joyous season of the year. So is youth - the spring time of life, the gayest part thereof. Then we are hopeful and confiding, not even dreaming of deceit, but believe everybody to be just what they appear to be - our friends. But when the summer of life comes on, we learn to look upon people and things in their true character, and often, even at their height of our enjoyment and ambition, we look back to the spring time of life, which was void of care, and exclaim, "oh what are the pleasures we perish to win, compared with the first little shiner we caught with a pin."

And often memory presents to our view the old brown two-story house where lived our dear old grandmother. In the long winter evenings as she sat knitting, she told us many stories of older times while we ate apples and drank cider. Those grand old apple trees, and even "the moss covered bucket that hung in the well," had charms for us. Our grandmother lived for score and sixteen years, and then, gently fell asleep, to wait the first resurrection.

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We say, God bless the grand others! Yes, we like old folks, and will ever welcome them to a warm place in our heart, and to the best chair in our house. But where now are those loved ones with whom we dwelt in the spring time of our life? They are all gone from that homestead, and some of them are sleeping their last sleep, and we almost involuntarily exclaim, "Oh, give us back our spring time of life! But as that cannot be granted unto us, we will enjoy the spring of the year, and be happy as we can, hoping to at last meet on the "evergreen shore," with our friends who have crossed over in advance of us.

..... Alone with God - it is a sublimity in silences and solitude. Alone! How still the air! The city sleeps in silence. No voice, no footsteps, nothing but the whispers of the night. How still it is; the stars wink at each other, but utter no words. The moon travels on her course, but is silent, Night! how grand the scene! My soul thrills as I contemplate. The world is hushed and I am alone - alone with God.

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### Better than any Physician

"William dear," feebly called the invalid wife, who was supposed to be nearing the end of her earthly career.

"Yes, darling," answered the sorrowing husband. "What is it?" "When I am gone," said she, "I feel that for the sake of the motherless little ones that you should marry again."

"Do you really think it would be best?" asked the faithful William.

"Yes, William, I really do," replied the invalid. "After a reasonable length of time you should seek the companionship of some good woman." "Do you know, my dear," said the husband, "that you have lifted a great burden from my mind? Now, there is that charming widow Jones across the way. She has acted rather friendly toward me ever since you

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were taken ill. Of course, dear she could never fill your place, but she is young, plump and pretty, and I am sure she would do her best to lessen my grief."

"William Henry Brown"! exclaimed the female whose days were supposed to be numbered, as she partly raised herself upon the pillow, "if you ever dare install that redheaded, frecklefaced, squint-eyed hussy in my shoes, I'll - I'll - and then she fainted.

But the next day Mrs. Brown was able to sit up, and two days later she was down stairs.

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